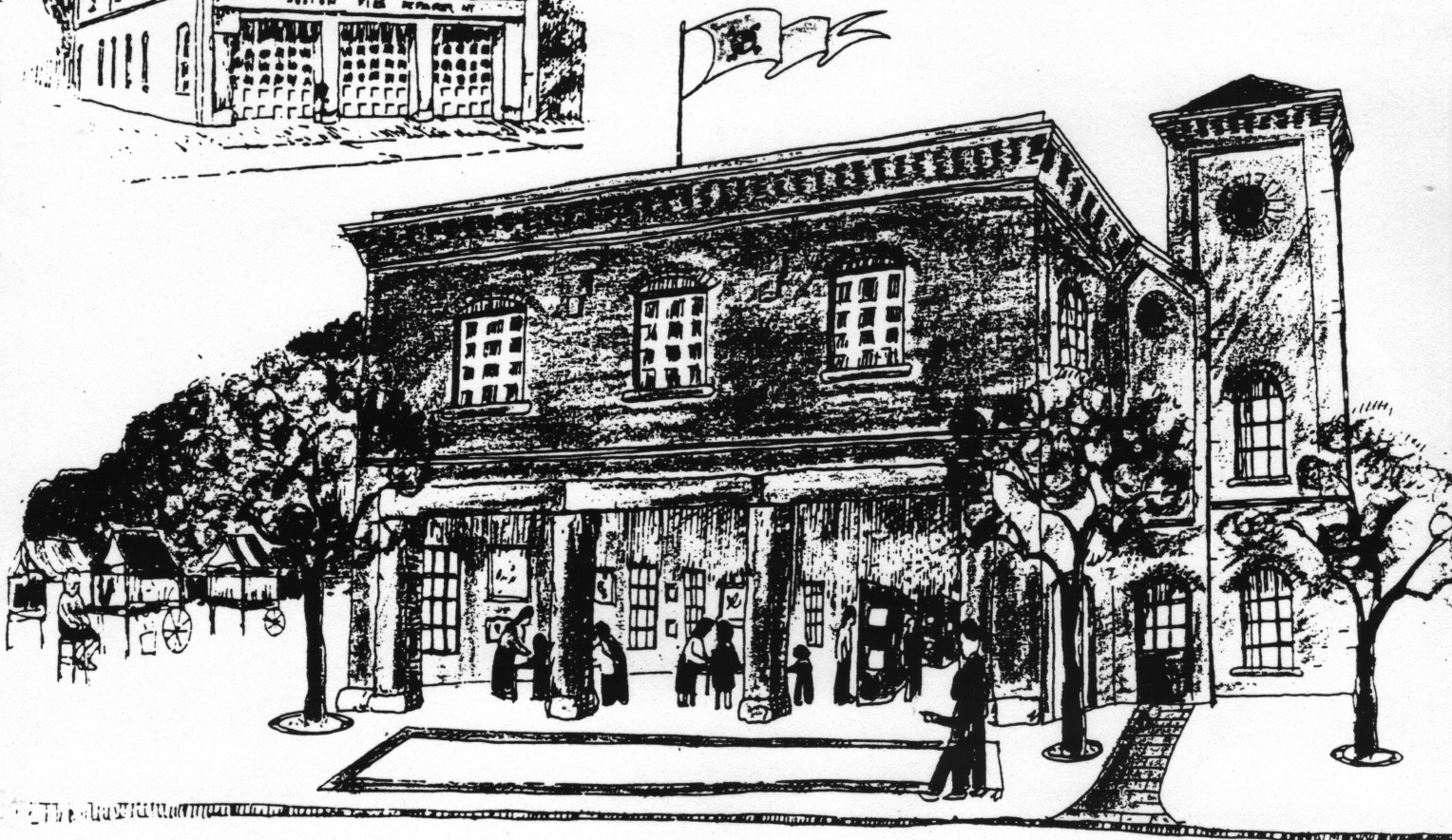
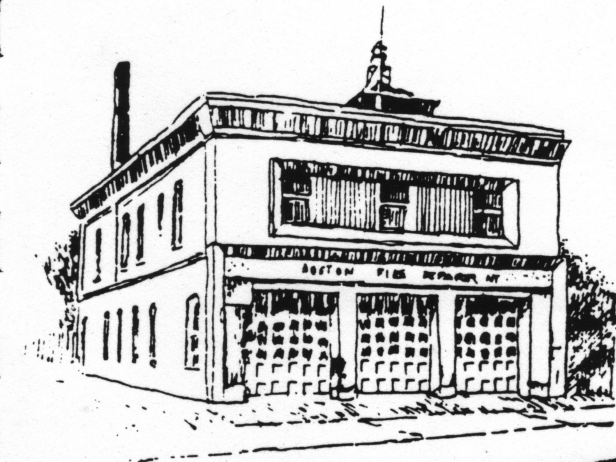


Development Proposal For The

# Former Jamaica Plain Fire Station

659 Centre Street, Jamaica Plain, MA

May 24, 1985



Submitted to:

City of Boston, Department of Public Facilities, Boston, MA 02108

Prepared by:

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Historical Preservation  
Non Profit Consultation  
Recycling and Rehabilitation

Joseph F. Timilty  
President

## Frontier Enterprises Inc.



May 24, 1985

Mr. Daniel Hart, Director  
Public Facilities Department  
City of Boston  
26 Court Street, 6th Floor  
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Mr. Hart:

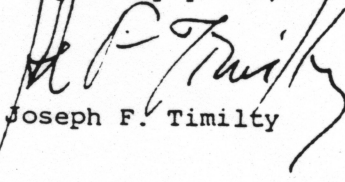
The historic Fire Station at 659 Centre Street has served the community of Jamaica Plain as a public facility for over 100 years. With the vacancy of the structure, a rare opportunity exists to continue serving the public in an innovative and creative way.

To this end a collaboration has been formed: an experienced developer, Frontier Enterprises, Inc.; an award winning architectural design firm, CityDesign Collaborative, Inc.; and a proven community based organization, the Jamaica Plain Arts Council. Together, with the input and participation of the people of Jamaica Plain, the team proposes a plan of financial benefit to the city, with activity and use expertly designed to meet the diverse needs of the community for quality arts programming and increased meeting space in a central location.

Throughout, the best interests of Jamaica Plain remain in the forefront. The unique aspects of this proposal include, but are not limited to: management of the building by the Jamaica Plain Arts Council, a group that has demonstrated a broad base of community support; designation of the purchase price to the renovation of the Jamaica Pond Bath House, in effect delivering two projects in one; and the inclusion of a municipal police substation to further serve the public interest.

This development team has clearly demonstrated its commitment to public service, financial responsibility and creative continued use of a historic public building, reflecting throughout the stated objectives of the City of Boston and its people.

Very truly yours,



Joseph F. Timilty



## THE OPPORTUNITY

### A UNIQUE COMMUNITY: A COMMON PROBLEM

Jamaica Plain is a unique community. Near the heart of Boston it is served by two major MBTA subway lines and boasts exquisite parks and green spaces. Its diverse population spans every cultural, economic and age group, both native and newcomer. These and other factors have drawn a high proportion of working artists to the area, who are a valuable natural resource.

Yet this community, like any other, is often divided along those same lines that make for interesting diversity. Geographically separate neighborhoods further promote disunity, and fear and apprehension grow.

A solution for this divided self must come from the community and serve all of the community. It must speak to the hearts and minds of the individuals and through them enrich the fabric of life for all. In location, it must be available to everyone and in a place where people feel welcome.

### THE CULTURAL ARTS CENTER CONCEPT

Over 800 people came together on May 4, 1985, to "Wake Up the Earth" and share a day of music and festivity. Once again the community shows its support for events which, through art and culture, create bonds and erase differences. Culture and the arts are:

- ...our link to our own humanity
- ...our eyes into the heart of another people
- ...our hope for joining together

A permanent community Multi-cultural Arts Center facility provides the opportunity for working together and sharing, through the arts and culture, on a daily basis:

Programs, classes and workshops, developed through community collaboration and input, provide ongoing opportunities for cross-cultural interaction and growth, through the arts...

...For example, activities providing seniors an opportunity to remain vital by expressing their life experiences through the arts, help prevent elderly isolation and intergenerational conflict.

Filling the vacuum left by budget cuts in the schools, young people have the means to develop skills of self-expression and aesthetic awareness through participation in the arts...

...A resource center for parents and teachers centralizes materials and ideas for educational programs.

Artists have a place to share the fruits of their labors and to enhance the overall quality of life through their efforts...

...Exhibits, concerts, celebrations, poetry readings become a regular part

of community life.

Everyone has access to a rich diet of cultural and art activity designed to increase our awareness of ourselves and each other...

..Exhibits highlighting the arts, foods, language and information about the home countries of Jamaica Plain residents is a resource to schools and an enlightening experience for all.

#### THE OLD JAMAICA PLAIN FIREHOUSE: A PERFECT SOLUTION

The old firehouse at 659 Centre Street in Jamaica Plain is a historic structure which has served the community as a public facility for over 100 years. The original structure was completed in 1874 and had been the home of Engine Company No. 28 and Hook and Ladder Company No. 10 until December, 1984, when the Boston Fire Department finally vacated the building to move into the newly constructed station at 746 Centre Street.

In 1978, prior to budget cuts that prevented it, the Fire Department was scheduled to vacate the building. At that time, the manager of Jamaica Plain's "Little City Hall" approached the newly organized Arts Council to generate ideas for using the building as a Multi-cultural Arts Center, to replace the loss of the Children's Museum and to continue the use of the building as a public facility.

The old brick firehouse, with its four story hose tower, is a unique historical and architectural landmark located in the center of Jamaica Plain's primary business district. A recent survey by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (1982) recommended that the building be further studied for historic preservation, public use, and enjoyment. Its central location and easy accessibility to all the varied neighborhoods of Jamaica Plain suggest that its continued use as a public facility will benefit the entire community

#### THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY BENEFITS

An assured by-product of participation in the arts is increased self-esteem and self-awareness. Having an on-going forum for expression lessens the need for such negative expressions as graffiti and vandalism and gives adolescents a positive focus for their energies.

The steady flow of participants, occurring at all times of the day, every day, stimulates the surrounding business community.

The creative use of one of the most interesting buildings in Jamaica Plain enhances the overall appearance of the neighborhood.

Communication is increased, tension is reduced.

Community groups gain increased space for meetings and activities in the large community room on the first floor.

Input and participation of community groups and individuals develops



pride in the concept and increases overall community morale.

In the words of State Representative Kevin Fitzgerald, the proposed Arts Center becomes "...a wonderful and creative focal point for the community."

#### ARTS ELSEWHERE

The concept of a community based arts center is not a unique one in the Boston area or around the nation. Spirit Square in Charlotte, NC, has revitalized the downtown area with a "festival retail market" approach. Locally, arts centers have successfully incorporated the concept of mixed-use in the South End, Brookline and Cambridge.

The Brookline Arts Center, also located in a converted fire station on Marmouth Street, recently celebrated its 20th anniversary - 80% of their \$100,000 budget is earned through tuitions, memberships and the sale of art supplies. All of these projects demonstrate strong city support for the arts.

## THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

### REUSE SUMMARY

It is envisaged that the renovated spaces will be occupied by three primary community service and/or arts oriented users:

1. Boston Police Department: Reactivate a much needed Jamaica Plain substation unit which will occupy approximately fifty percent (50%) of the building including the entire First Floor and portions of the Basement. The former engine garaging area will be retained as open area, primarily for community use, but in large measure, available for community/arts oriented activities. This association pending further negotiation. .
2. Jamaica Plain Arts Council - The Arts Council will use portions of the windowless basement for storage, workshop and potentially gallery space in as much as these uses do not necessarily require natural lighting. Office space and meeting facilities will be provided for the council as part of the arts related use of the second floor area.
3. Arts Related Tenants - The second floor of the building will be brought to code and, to the maximum extent possible, made available 'as is' to arts related businesses and organizations. In an effort to keep the rents as affordable as possible to these groups, except for the work required by code, improvements will be the responsibility of the Tenants themselves, supplemented with 'sweat equity' contributions by Arts Council member volunteers.

### PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

As described above, the basement and first floor space will be shared by the Boston Police Department and the Jamaica Plain Art Council. The second floor will be devoted to rental space, to be offered, to the extent financially feasible, to arts related entities.

The building will be brought "to code"; new heating, plumbing and electrical systems installed; new toilets and kitchen provided. Two new stairwells will improve accessibility to the Basement and Second Floor. To the maximum extent possible, the 'firehouse' image of the proposed assembly/community space will be retained.

Windows will be refurbished and perimeter walls and ceilings insulated to achieve maximum energy efficiency.

The exterior improvements include a new roof, repointing of the brick exterior, removal of the panel skin on the front of the building and historic restoration of the front facade.

Site improvements include development of a safer and more efficient parking area to the side of the building; integration of the 'plaza'/driveway area as an extension of the assembly/community space as



weather allows; a new entry area for the Second Floor office users and a service lane along the northerly boundary. The back courtyard will be devoted to outdoor workshops for adult and children activities. Landscaping will act to buffer the site and to define and accentuate the building.

## THE DEAL

### Concept

A primary goal of this proposal is to restore the firehouse to a center of public service and community activity.

The development concept is to develop as intensively as possible, major portions of the building to be leased to compatible municipal and arts related tenants at market or near market rates. Less desirable portions of the building, i.e. the front basement, will provide the Jamaica Plain Arts Council a permanent home base from which to grow and develop its programs.

### Financial Considerations

The financial projections for this project assume a total development cost of approximately \$313,000 and rent levels ranging from \$6.00 - \$14.00/SF depending on the desirability of the particular space location and level of tenant finish.

By restricting profit from rental income to the 'for profit' component to an agreed upon percentage, income surpluses can provide the Arts Council with a solid 'replacement reserve' for the building, or used to further underwrite their rents.

The Arts Council pledges to provide the project rent reserve to be placed in escrow to insure stable cash flow.

### PURCHASE PRICE

The Arts Council Partnership is prepared to pay the City of Boston \$35,000.00 for the land and building known as the "Old Fire House". The method of this transaction offers a truly unique opportunity for investment and reinvestment in Jamaica Plain neighborhood. As a condition to the Partnership purchase offer, the City must then agree to reallocate and commit those acquisition funds to the rehabilitation of the Jamaica Pond Bath House. In essence, this Partnership offer is expressly written to underwrite activities which directly enhance our community.

The Jamaica Plain Arts Council will serve as Custodian of the building and one of the primary tenants. Space rented by the Arts Council will include use for offices, arts, classrooms and inter-cultural and community oriented activities and events. A weekly schedule that typifies the many different activities that might occur in a community arts center is shown below.

The large community room in the front of the building will be available to organizations for such activities as meetings, programs and fundraisers, and to the Arts Council for such events as music, dance and theatrical programs, International Crafts Market, and community festivals. The Arts Council will be responsible for scheduling in this area.

Organizations for such activities as meetings, programs, seminars, fundraisers, and to the Arts Council for such events as music, dance and theatrical programs, International Crafts Market, community festivals. The Arts Council will be responsible for scheduling in this area.

These spaces will be rented to arts-related and other compatible interests.

### WEEKLY SCHEDULE at the FIREHOUSE

COMMUNITY ROOM			CLASSROOMS		
	a.m.	p.m.	a.m.	p.m.	evening
SUN	International Family Breakfast	Int'l. Crafts Market	Int'l. Folkdancing	Arts Classes for Seniors	After School Arts Classes
		After School Song, Dance, & Theater around Cultural Theme - for children of all ages.	Potluck Dinner	Crafts for Visiting School Group	
MON			Community Meeting	Parent Workshop	
TUES	Music & Movement with School Grp.	Folkdancing for Seniors	"Dance Free"	Crafts for Visiting School Group	
WED		Performance for School Group	Fundraiser for Local Group	Art Classes for Adults	
THURS		Ballroom dancing for Seniors	Int'l. Crafts Market	Arts Council Performance	
FRI			Int'l. Crafts Market		

International Crafts Market

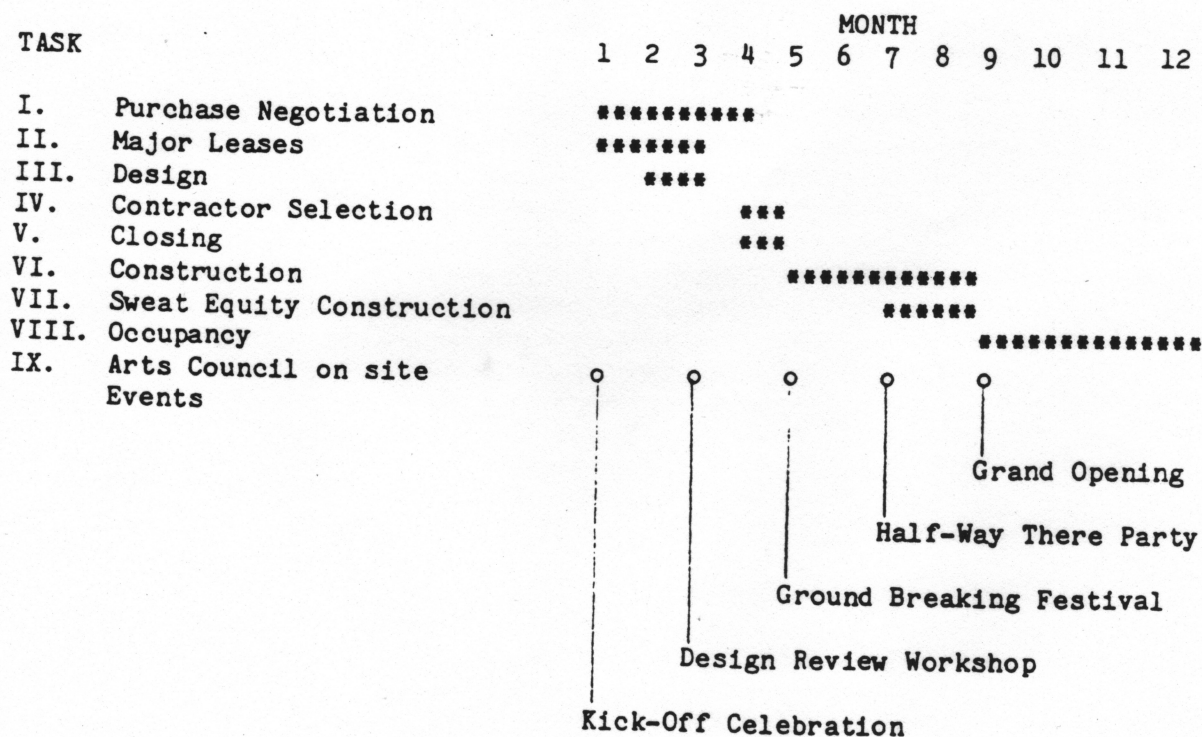


The proposal to acquire embraces significantly important benefits through the acquisition method and the longer term relationship of the Arts Council, the Fire House and the Community. Those important factors include but are not limited to the following:

1. This is a community based project undertaken by the Partnership to benefit the residents of the community.
2. The Jamaica Plain Arts Council, a Massachusetts non-profit organization, has committed its resources to improve and manage the property for the expressed betterment of our neighborhood.
3. The activities located at this property, once renovated and operating, will be to provide service and cultural programming to the residents of the Jamaica Plain.
4. The purchase price offer reflects a value and/or re-use of the property as a community controlled property not a private, for profit, real estate investment.
5. The proposal contemplates the rehabilitation of two important buildings in Jamaica Plain while simultaneously allowing the community to invest and retain those improvement funds in the neighborhood.

#### SCHEDULE FOR COMPLETION

The following chart summarizes the projection tasking and completion of the major work items required to carry this monthly endeavor to operational reality:



## THE TEAM

Our Team, The Arts Council Partnership, consists of the Jamaica Plain Arts Council, Frontier Enterprises, Inc., and CityDesign Collaborative, Inc. with Jan Wampler as associated Architect. After careful consideration of various development options, a team approach was chosen to obtain the following balance:

Community service and arts programming by the Jamaica Plain Arts Council as a major tenant.

The financial backing and administrative expertise of an experienced developer.

The design, construction, and community liaison experience of two highly regarded Boston architectural practices.

This partnership will enable the construction and operation of a community arts center that is truly responsive to the needs of the community, is economically viable, and does not pose a financial burden on the city.

The Jamaica Plain Arts Council will serve as Custodian of the building and the major tenant. During this time the Arts Council will build its endowment from capital fund-raising drives, grants, profits from programming, and contributions from foundations and private philanthropists.

Frontier Enterprises, Inc. is proposed as the Prime Developer of the property. Frontier Enterprises will have complete financial responsibility for the property.

CityDesign Collaborative, Inc. will function as the architect and will be responsible for modification and renovation of the building in a timely manner. CityDesign will work closely with the Arts Council to design a building that will provide flexibility in terms of programming, be responsive to community needs, and be economically viable. Jan Wampler, Architect, as a Jamaica Plain resident, will play a critical role in the successful integration of the community's needs with the imperatives of cost effective rehabilitation.

### JAMAICA PLAIN ARTS COUNCIL:

The Jamaica Plain Arts Council, active since 1978, is a dynamic and dedicated organization.

By making the arts available for everyone and by encouraging participation



in all forms of artistic expression we believe that many goals are realized. Personal and interpersonal growth, cultural awareness, enrichment of the surroundings, and community harmony are among these.

Our Board of Directors, giving countless hours of volunteer time for this vision, brings together talents in the arts, education, finance, engineering, community organizing and more.

The membership reflects a similar diversity of interest and background, also having one common denominator - an interest in the arts in their day to day lives.

In the past year, new energy and ideas have brought us forward to the point where we feel the need for a centrally located space, an Arts Center, reflective of the cultural diversity and needs of this community.

We have demonstrated strong community support for arts programming in general and a Cultural Arts Center in particular. Our commitment to these objectives, shown by the creative events we have sponsored and by our diligent approach to obtaining the Firehouse, further illustrates the ability of the Jamaica Plain Arts Council to carry out this mandate.

#### FRONTIER ENTERPRISES:

Headed by former Massachusetts Senator Joseph F. Timilty, Frontier Enterprises is a development and consulting firm specializing in historic rehabilitation projects and consulting assistance to not-for-profit organizations. His knowledge of local, state and federal policies and programs, coupled with action oriented personal involvement enables his organization to play a catalytic role in implementing innovative development strategies.

#### CITYDESIGN COLLABORATIVE, INC.:

Established in 1980, CityDesign Collaborative, Inc. has gained an outstanding reputation in the New England region for its unique blend of planning, architectural, landscaping and community liaison expertise, resulting in numerous successful and award winning projects. Particular emphasis has been developed in the area of historic building preservation and reuse. Noteworthy projects include conversion of the Oak Square School in Allston, a recent preservation award recipient, conversion of a 'double house' mansion in Newburyport to a successful 24 room inn with complete dining and meeting facilities, an integrated senior center community facility in North Andover and numerous projects through Boston's NDEA to assist local merchants in building renovation.

#### JAN WAMPLER, ARCHITECT:

Jan Wampler has made a career of realizing architectural forms that reflect the ideas and feelings of those who will use them. For the fourteen years that his firm has been in existence, he has focused on community projects - from play/learning environments for children to shared-living housing for the elderly- as well as specialized designs for private homes. His architectural achievements have been acknowledged by one State of Massachusetts and two PROGRESSIVE ARCHITECTURE awards.